

## Message Text

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INFO AMCONSUL ZAGREB

UNCLAS BELGRADE 2794

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SCUL, YO

SUBJ: VISIT OF DIRECTOR GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM MESSER

REF: BELGRADE 2643

SUMMARY:

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM DIRECTOR MESSER VISITED BELGRADE JUNE 2 FOR DISCUSSION WITH YUGOSLAV OFFICIALS. FAISECTC CALLS MEETING FOLLOW-UP TO CULTURAL DELEGATION 1973 WASHINGTON VISIT. VISIT HELPED PUT PROBLEMS AND OPPORTUNITIES FINE ARTS EXCHANGE INTO SHARPER FOCUS. END SUMMARY.

1. BELGRADE VISIT OF GUGENHEIM MUSEUM DIRECTOR THOMAS MESSER OFFERED EMBASSY OCCASION DISCUSS FINE ARTS EXCHANGE PROGRAM WITH YUGOSLAV OFFICIALS AT FAISECTC AND THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART. DISCUSSIONS ALSO BROUGHT TO LIGHT SEVERAL POINTS REQUIRING FURTHER CLARIFICATION IF THE EXCHANGE OF ART EXHIBITS PROPOSED AS A RESULT OF THE YUGOSLAV CULTURAL DELEGATION'S TRIP TO THE US IN 1973 IS TO BE REALIZED.

2. CONSIDERABLE MISUNDERSTANDING CENTERS AROUND THE INTERPRETATION OF THE JOINT STATEMENT SIGNED AT CONCLUSION DELEGATION'S 1973 WASHINGTON VISIT. EMBASSY POSITION IS THAT WHILE STATEMENT IS AN EXPRESSION OF WILLINGNESS AND INTEREST OF BOTH PARTIES TO ENCOURAGE

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MORE ACTIVE CULTURAL EXCHANGES BETWEEN COUNTRIES, IT DOES NOT

COMMIT EITHER SIDE IRREVOCABLY TO ACTION. YUGOSLAVS TEND TO REGARD IT AS AN ACTION DOCUMENT WHICH MORALLY, IF NOT LEGALLY BINDS SIGNATORIES TO IMPLEMENT PROJECTS OUTLINED THEREIN. IN SPITE OF REPEATED ATTEMPTS TO POINT OUT THAT STATEMENT OFFERS FRAMEWORK FOR DISCUSSION FAISECTC CONTINUES TO INSIST ON ITS BINDING NATURE.

3. MESSER VISIT CONSIDERABLE HELP IN PUTTING THINGS INTO PROPER PERSPECTIVE. HE APPEARED SURPRISED TO LEARN, APPARENTLY FOR THE FIRST TIME AT JUNE 2 FAISECTC MEETING, THAT YUGOSLAVS CONSIDER GUGGENHEIM SPONSORSHIP AND SUPPORT OF CONTEMPORARY EXHIBITION REFERRED TO IN FINE ARTS SECTION JOINT STATEMENT A FOREGONE CONCLUSION. HE POLITELY BUT FIRMLY EXPLAINED THAT ALTHOUGH INTERESTED IN PRINCIPLE, HIS MUSEUM HAS NO SUCH AGREEMENT, AND THAT NO PRIOR COMMITMENT EXISTS. MESSER EXPRESSED HIS WILLINGNESS TO SHOW YUGOSLAV ARTISTS AT GUGENHEIM, BUT SUGGESTED AN EXHIBITION FEATURING YUGOSLAVIA PLUS TWO OTHER COUNTRIES AS MORE FEASIBLE SOLUTION BOTH FOR GUGGENHEIM AND PARTICIPANTS. HIS PROPOSAL WOULD REDUCE COSTS TO PARTICIPANTS, PROMOTE MORE POSITIVE AND SYMPATHETIC REACTION FROM THE CRITICS, AND IN HIS OPINION, A THREE COUNTRY SHOW HAD FAR GREATER CHANCE OF CREATING THE FAVORABLE IMPRESSION YUGOSLAVS WANTED. A NATIONAL SOLO EXHIBITION HE FELT WOULD NOT ACHIEVE THIS. BY IMPLICATION HE SAID THAT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FROM GUGENHEIM FAR MORE LIKELY IF TROIKA ARRANGEMENT COULD BE WORKED OUT. INITIAL YUGOSLAV REACTION WAS COOL.

4. YUGOSLAVS CLEARLY ATTACHED CONSIDERABLE IMPORTANCE TO MESSER VISIT WHICH FAISECTC REFERRED TO AS FOLLOW UP TO THE CULTURAL DELEGATION'S 1973 CONTACT. HIS TWO DAY VISIT IN BELGRADE, AT GOY EXPENSE, INCLUDED A CALL ON DUSAN CKREBIC, PREMIER OF THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA, AND WAS REPORTED BY TANJUG, POLITIKA, AND A BRIEF TV CLIP ON THE EVENING NEWS.

5. DISCUSSIONS OVER THE PAST FEW DAYS STRONGLY SUGGEST THAT YUGOSLAVS HAVE NOT GIVEN UP ON IDEA OF NEGOTIATING A CULTURAL AGREEMENT WITH THE US. UNTIL THEY CAN GET ONE, THEY SEEM INTENT ON CONSIDERING THE JOINT STATEMENT AS AN EFFECTIVE SUBSTITUTE.

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